

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: THANOM ON US MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTAKACHORN HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE
JULY 18. QUESTIONS THAT REPORTERS ASKED OF HIM
AND HIS ANSWERS APPEAR VIERBATIM BELOW:

REPORTER: I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER ANY B52 S THAT ARE
STATIONED IN THAILAND WILL BE WITHDRAWN UNDER THE PLAN THAT IS
BEING CARRIED OUT AT PRESENT.

THANOM: IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO PULL THEM OUT FROM GUAM
ALREADY BUT THEY WILL NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM THAILAND YET.
I HOWEVER FEEL THAT WHEN AUGUST 15 IS REACHED THE DEADLINE
AGREED TO BY THE U.S. CONGRESS FOR THE CESSATION
OF BOMBING IT MIGHT WITHDRAW THEM THEN. I HAVE
INSTRUCTED THE SUPREME COMMAND, FORWARD, AND THE MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO CONSIDER THIS SUBJECT JOINTLY BEFORE-
HAND. WE HAVE NOT ONLY JUST TAKEN IT UP FOR CONSIDERATION
BUT WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING IT THROUGHOUT.

REPORTER: FROM WHAT ANGLES ARE THE SUPREME COMMAND, FORWARD
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AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS CONSIDERING IT JOINTLY?

THANOM: FROM THE ANGLE OF THE REDUCTION OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES TO THE MINIMUM NECESSARY, AND WHAT THEIR STRENGTH SHOULD BE IN EACH PLACE THEY ARE STATIONED IN DEPENDING ON THE NEED OF THE UNITED STATES.

REPORTER: WHEN THE UNITED STATES IS NO LONGER INVOLVED MILITARILY IN ANY WAY IN INDOCHINA, TO WHAT STRENGTH DOES OUR GOVERNMENT CONSIDER IT SHOULD CONTINUE STATIONING MILITARY FORCES HERE?

THANOM: IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION BECAUSE EVEN WHEN IT IS NO LONGER INVOLVED IN INDOCHINA THERE ARE SEVERAL COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION THAT SAY GREATER SECURITY WILL BE FELT SHOULD THERE BE AMERICAN AIR FORCE UNITS READY TO PROVIDE A PROTECTION AND SUPPORT. THIS IS BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW WHO MIGHT COME AND INTERFERE, SINCE RUSSIA IS ENDEAVORING TO EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD WHILE RED CHINA, OR COMMUNISTS IN ASIA CONSIDER IT THEIR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE. THEREFORE WE MUST BE ON THE ALERT AND ON OUR GUARD AGAINST PERSONS WHO WANT TO COME AND INTERFERE IN THIS REGION.

REPORTER: AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES IN THAILAND ARE TO THE STRENGTH OF ABOUT 40,000 MEN NOW. WOULD THAT BE TOO STRONG SHOULD IT NOT HAVE ANY COMBAT FORCES IN INDOCHINA?

THANOM: ITS MILITARY FORCES STATIONED HERE NOW ARE AIR FORCE UNITS AND UNITS TO GUARD AIRFIELDS, BUT IT HAS NOT NO LONGER HAVE TO HELP BOMB IN VIETNAME, LAOS, AND CAMBODIA, THE STRENGTH OF THOSE MILITARY FORCES WOULD BE REDUCED AUTOMATICALLY. IT WOULD REDUCE THEM ITSELF BECAUSE IT WANTS TO CUT DOWN EXPENDITURE INCURRED ALSO. UNGER

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